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Rhode Island Joins 8 Other States to Launch New Algebra II Test

Rhode Island has joined a multistate partnership to develop a new Algebra II test that will be administered jointly by the nine partner states. The project, announced today (April 10, 2007) in Washington by Achieve, Inc., is the largest effort a group of states has ever undertaken to develop a common course assessment based on common standards.

The test, which school districts in the state may adopt voluntarily, will be developed over the next several months. It will be piloted in the fall and administered for the first time in May 2008.

“This new test will be aligned with our current mathematics standards for high-school students,” said Peter McWalters, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education. “It will be a high-quality end-of-course examination to ensure that students taking Algebra II in Rhode Island are well prepared for higher education and for the world of work.”

He noted that the test will be particularly useful for high schools that have chosen end-of-course exams as one of the methods by which students can demonstrate that they have achieved proficiency in mathematics – a graduation requirement that will go into effect for the Class of 2008.

“Doing well on this test will signify that students are prepared to do college-level work in mathematics, so we are exploring using this exam for college placement,” said Jack Warner, Commissioner of Higher Education. “As more students take the exam and understand the importance of Algebra II, we will reduce the need for remedial mathematics in higher education and we will improve students’ overall ability to succeed in college.”

The test is a project of the ADP Network, a group of 29 states committed to preparing all students for college work. Achieve, which formed the ADP Network, will assist the nine partner states by supporting the development of the test, providing an annual performance report, and helping the states develop and share tools and strategies to improve the teaching and learning of high-school mathematics.

The other eight states in the partnership are Arkansas, Kentucky, Indiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Ohio, and Pennsylvania.

The test is being developed and will be owned by the test company Pearson Educational Measurement, based on standards developed by Achieve. Achieve is a bipartisan, nonprofit organization, founded in 1996, to help states improve education. More information on the partnership is available on the Achieve Web site, www.achieve.org

